

I support media diversity

This letter is in opposition of the FCC's proposed changes in broadcast media ownership rules as part of the FCC's Biennial Review of broadcast media ownership rules. (Docket N. 02-277)

These rule changes will have a profound impact on the public that relies on the news media for information about their world and who shapes it. By enabling the further concentration of broadcast media ownership via these rule changes, the FCC will contribute to an increasing monopoly in the hands of a few corporate conglomerates that can control the airwaves and, thus, the information that is made available to the public. This is a direct violation of the FCC's trust to protect the public's right to know and to protect the public airwaves.

The fact that only one of the three major television network nightly news programs has reported on this issue is indicative of how their parent companies are already influencing the information that is provided to the public. It is not in the best interest of these conglomerates for the public to know about the proposed rule changes and their potential impact on the public, so their news outlets don't report on it. That kind of conflict of interest will only grow and have an increasingly detrimental impact on the public.

The fact that the overwhelming majority of the nearly 25,000 comments from the public about these rule changes that have been lodged with the FCC should tell the FCC something. It is the public that the FCC is supposed to be serving, not corporate America.

In keeping with the FCC's state goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly urge the FCC to retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may be indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our nation's founders believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jerrienne Hayslett
Milwaukee WI